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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine causes for attrition among students in an Adult Basic Education (A.B.E.) program located in a non-metropolitan area. Dropouts and completers were compared by demographic characteristics and by sources of difficulty (nonschool-related, school-related, and affective) in attending class. In addition, causes for attrition of enrolled to registered dropouts and previous to present educational levels of all participants were compared, and the reputation of the program was ascertained. Based on a review of the literature that indicated, among other things, most studies of A.B.E. students had been conducted in large urban areas, survey questionnaires were designed and mailed to 233 subjects who attended A.B.E. classes between September, 1977, and March, 1981, in a rural area of northwest Ohio. A total of 83 students responded, with 32 of those being students who had completed A.B.E., and 51 of those who had dropped out. Chi-square analysis was used to determine the significance of the data gathered. The results indicated that those who dropped out more often experienced conflicts with job and time of class and felt discouragement and lack of progress. Those who completed more frequently did not find situational barriers to attendance but did express feelings of fear. Significant differences were not found between dropouts and completers in the demographic traits and between registered and enrolled dropouts relative to causes for attrition. No significant relationship between previous and present educational level was established; however, nearly all former students agreed that the program had a favorable reputation. (Author/KC)

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CAUSES FOR ATTRITION AMONG ADULT BASIC EDUCATION STUDENTS

Patricia L. Cramer

Submitted to the Graduate College of Bowling Green State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

March 1982

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CHAPTER III

METHOD

Population

Since 86% of all A.B.E. programs are located in urban areas (Hunter & Harman, 1979), most previous research has dealt with students in large cities. The target population for this study consisted of former students from the A.B.E. centers located in areas of Northwest Ohio where the population is 10,000 or less; thus, statistics and information, which to date have been undetermined or hidden by data gathered from urban areas where A.B.E. programs are larger and greater in number, would be collected. The experimentally accessible population was past participants in the Port Clinton City Schools A.B.E. district, since the student advisory committee for this district requested that such a study be made. The district includes all of Ottawa County, Ohio, where the five A.B.E. centers are located--a morning program at St. John's Lutheran Church in Port Clinton, and evening programs at Danbury Local High School, Port Clinton High School, Oak Harbor High School, and Genoa High School. All of the former students had voluntarily enrolled in the program.

The subjects of this study attended A.B.E. classes between September 1977 and March 1981. Out of a total of 233 subjects, 34 or 14.6% of the surveys were unable to be delivered, 116 or 49.8% were delivered but the students did not respond, and 83 responded for a 35.6% return. Those who had completed A.B.E. studies were 46 of the total subjects; 32 of these students or 69.6% responded. Those who had dropped out of school before completing their studies were 187 of the total, and 51 or 27.3% of these

ABSTRACT

The major purpose of this study was to determine causes for attrition among students in an Adult Basic Education (A.B.E.) program located in a non-metropolitan area. Dropouts and completers were compared by demographic characteristics and by sources of difficulty (non-school related, school related, and affective) in attending class. In addition, causes for attrition of enrolled to registered dropouts and previous to present educational levels of all participants were compared, and the reputation of the program was ascertained.

A review of the related research indicated that, to date, most studies of A.B.E. students had been conducted in large urban areas. Attrition was seen as a major problem of the federal and state sponsored program to give dropouts a free second chance to develop basic skills. Characteristics of the adult learner and causes of separation from A.B.E., other adult education programs, and high school were also examined.

Survey questionnaires were mailed to both the dropouts and completers. Chi-square analysis was used to determine significance.

The results indicated that those who dropped out more often experienced conflicts with job and time of class and felt discouragement and lack of progress. Those who completed more frequently did not find situational barriers to attendance but did express feelings of fear. Significant differences were not found between dropouts and completers in the demographic traits questioned and between registered and enrolled dropouts regarding causes for attrition. No significant relationship between previous and present educational level was established; however, nearly all former students agreed that the program did have a favorable reputation.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Adult Basic Education (A.B.E.) is an educational program for adults who have dropped out of elementary or secondary school and who wish to improve their basic skills in reading, math, the English language, and general everyday life "coping" skills such as shopping, government and law, household finances, and health. It is ironic that the program specifically designed to help dropouts itself is a victim of attrition. Administrators have reported dropout rates of up to 50% during the first five weeks of class (Mezirow, Darkenwald, & Knox, 1975)--a rate which continues to rise, although more slowly, as the term progresses. Student retention and attrition are major problems listed by four-fifths of the administrators (Irish, 1975) in a network of state-grant A.B.E. programs which was authorized by the Adult Education Act of 1966 to provide a free second chance for undereducated adults to improve their basic education in preparation for vocational training and thus become more productive and responsible citizens. Unlike secondary education in which attendance is mandatory, at least to a certain age, and where there are established procedures for following up delinquent students, administrators of A.B.E. programs often do not know why students who have voluntarily entered their programs begin to attend less and less until they finally drop out.

In spite of the attrition rate, the program's value has been emphasized. Congress, justifying the cost/benefit ratio, authorized $230 million for fiscal year 1980. In recommendations made regarding Former President Carter's Comprehensive National Urban Policy, the National

Advisory Council on Adult Education has promoted adult education as a major factor in revitalizing America's cities (NACAE, 1979).

Locally, the district Student Advisory Committee, meeting to evaluate the effectiveness of the program, suggested that causes for students' failing to complete their programs should be identified and that the students should be encouraged to return. To date only informal teacher/student contacts have been made to determine why students drop out; no formal study has been conducted to discover patterns of attrition.

The reasons for attrition usually given by those students who can be easily contacted involve personal, family, and job-related problems. These non-school related reasons may be the true causes for separation over which the A.B.E. program has little or no control. Since this contact is almost always made by one's own instructor, however, the student may be reluctant to verbalize dissatisfaction with the school, the program, or the teacher. Underlying psychological reasons for withdrawal, such as fear of repeated inadequacy and failure which the student is not comfortable expressing to the instructor, may permanently "close doors of opportunity and open doors of frustration. Both student and society stand to lose" (Wilson, 1977, p. 1).

In order for the local Adult Basic Education program to become more sensitive and adapt to the needs of its prospective students, it is necessary to determine why former students have dropped out of the program.

Goal and Objectives

The goal of this research was to ascertain the reasons for former students' dropping out of the Adult Basic Education program. Delineated

objectives included: (1) determining demographic differences between dropouts and completers so that a profile of the dropout-prone could be constructed, (2) comparing sources of difficulty in attending class between dropouts and completers, (3) determining whether those who separated from the program shortly after entering left for different reasons than those who attended longer before dropping out, (4) comparing the previous to present educational levels of A.B.E. students, and (5) ascertaining the reputation of the local program.

Research Goal and Objectives

Goal

The goal of this study was to determine why former students have dropped out of the Adult Basic Education program.

Objectives

The objectives of this research were to:

1. Compare dropouts and completers by demographic traits;
2. Discover reasons for student-initiated separation from and sources of difficulty in attending the A.B.E. program;
3. Determine whether enrolled dropouts left the program for reasons different from those of registered dropouts;
4. Compare previous to present educational level of A.B.E. students;
5. Ascertain the reputation of the local program.

Definitions

Dropout --An adult, sixteen years of age or older, who has enrolled in an A.B.E. program and who has informed the instructor of withdrawal or

who has missed eight or more consecutive class sessions without notifying the instructor of reasons for absence or intent to return.

Enrolled Dropout --A dropout who has attended A.B.E. sessions for less than twelve hours.

Registered Dropout --A dropout who has attended A.B.E. sessions for twelve hours or more. (Only those who have attended for twelve hours or more are officially counted as participants by the state department of education.)

A.B.E. Entry Level Student --A student who either scores below ninth grade reading level or cannot perform basic arithmetic calculations with whole numbers, fractions, decimals, and percents, or both on diagnostic inventories given when the person begins the A.B.E. program.

General Educational Development (G.E.D.) Entry Level Student --A student who both scores ninth grade reading level or above and can do all basic arithmetic operations on diagnostic inventories given when the person begins the A.B.E. program.

English as a Second Language (E.S.L.) Student --A student whose native language is not English and who comes to Adult Basic Education classes to learn to speak and/or read and/or write the English language.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review covers four areas concerned with attrition in Adult Basic Education programs. First, the importance of the A.B.E. program is maintained and the effects of attrition on it are stated. The second phase deals with the adult as a learner--the older student's orientation to education, ability, and climate necessary for success. Psychological factors relating to attrition, characteristics of the potential dropout, and stated causes of separation compose the third section while the final portion addresses the related areas of causes for not completing high school and other free or low-cost adult education programs.

The Adult Basic Education Program and Attrition

Approximately 40% of the United States' population has less than a high school education (Cross, 1981). A study made by World Education at the request of the Ford Foundation revealed that this figure included 54 to 60 million functionally illiterate adults--they lack the competencies such as the ability to complete driver's license and employment applications, ability to follow directions, minimal writing skills, and basic decoding skills which are necessary to function in society proficiently. Only 2% to 4% of these are being reached by adult education programs (Hunter & Harman, 1979). In the past fifteen years, the Adult Basic Education programs, established by an act of Congress, have been endeavoring to provide education for these people so that they may function more effectively as parents, workers, and citizens. Indeed, enrollments have

increased from nearly 38,000 in 1965 to nearly 1,687,000 in 1977 (NACAE, 1979). These participants, however, represent less than 4% of those who could benefit from such a program. Perhaps the findings of Bailon's study (1977) of residents in the Santa Barbara, California, area account for many non-participants--two-thirds were unaware that an adult education program existed. In addition, many who have heard of the program fail to avail themselves of the opportunity.

Besides this overwhelming majority who are not participating, the program itself suffers from a high dropout rate--40% to 60% nationally (Cain & Whalen, 1979; LaCagnina, 1979). Few reach the goals they set out to attain. Hunter and Harman (1979) report that in 1976, for example, only 9% of those enrolled in A.B.E. received certification at eighth grade level and 11% established high school equivalency. Such a high dropout rate and small number who attain their goals lower morale of both teachers and students and affect resource allocation which is often based on number of people registered in and attending the local program (Wilson, 1977).

If potential dropouts can be identified, the rate of attrition may at least be lowered. Not all problems of dropouts can be remedied by change in the school's program--each person has a unique make-up, and factors outside the learning situation will influence that individual. There are significant patterns and situations, however, which have been identified to which the A.B.E. program can address itself.

The Adult Learner

Orientation. Most adults take a problem centered approach to learning. They must be able to apply the acquired knowledge in solving a

problem or see relevance to a current responsibility whether it be vocational or self-improvement. Because the adult has many committments--family, job, community activities, and school--often the step-by-step academic theory development must yield to the practical, applied learning experience approach.

Most adult learning is work related--either to learn new or polish existing vocational skills in hopes of getting a job or acquiring a better one. For many, especially those entering A.B.E. to learn basic skills which are prerequisites for vocational training, there is great risk. These learners must admit inadequacies, overcome resistence to change, and face the possibility and pain of failure. Carter (1979) found, however, that those who succeeded formed very positive attitudes toward learning and its contribution to an improved life not only in terms of better jobs but also in terms of increased self confidence and enjoyment of learning.

While Houle (cited in Hiemstra, 1976) classified those who attend class into three categories--the goal-oriented, who have a distinct purpose or goal for each endeavor; the activity-oriented, who attend class for the social contact; and the learning-oriented who enjoy learning for its own sake--Cross (1981) states that only 10% of the adult learning projects are group situations in which an instructor is responsible for planning content, sequence, and pacing. Self directed learning (learner-controlled study of a single subject for a minimum of seven hours) is practiced by 79% to 100% of the country's population. Those least likely to participate in even this kind of education are the poorly educated, poorly paid, and older rural residents.

Ability. According to Hiemstra (1976) there are five factors related to learning ability: (1) recency of education, (2) prior participation in adult education, (3) health, (4) social status, and (5) amount of previous education. Those with more previous schooling and formal learning experiences will find returning to school easier and are more likely to have positive attitudes than those whose study skills have become rusty or were never well developed. The latter prefer to avoid another opportunity for failure, and if forced into a formal learning situation will experience such a high level of stress that learning will be impaired (Lovell, 1980).

While visual acuity reaches its peak around age 18 and then begins to decrease, with a sharp decline between ages 40 and 55, many problems can be alleviated by glasses and increased illumination or can be corrected by other means. Auditory acuity also decreases as one ages with pitch, volume, and rate problems much more evident after ages 65 or 70. Sensory acuity, psychomotor skills, and short-term memory also decline. For an adult

> the major impairment is to the organising and decision-making processes at the level of the central nervous system. The older person is slower in his actions because of a slowing in the central processes involved in perceiving signals and in selecting actions in response to items. These changes set limits to the speed of performance . . . (Lovell, 1980, p. 119)

Because one's pace and reaction time slows, speed is often sacrificed for accuracy; more time is taken to assure correctness; and more information needed before making a response. Under time pressure the older adult is likely to become confused and make mistakes, but removal of the speed factor shows no apparent relationship between age and learning performance. Yet it has been found that reluctance to engage in formal schooling

increases with age (Lovell, 1980). Interest and participation in adult education begin to decline in one's early thirties and drop sharply around age 55 when career is no longer a motivator and energy and mobility may lessen. Society feels that education is for the young. Moreover, members of the lower social classes value education less and are not so likely to participate as those at higher levels.

Although the adult is less tolerant than children of learning for its own sake and prefers to learn with real tools in genuine experiences rather than in simulations, good performance can be expected if the lesson is relevant to job or daily life. At the same time that they underestimate their ability to learn new material, adults are apt to overlook extensive and recent informal experiences. New concepts related to past experience are more meaningful and more easily learned. Conversely, unlearning an old skill to acquire a new one can be a difficult and slow process.

In a study of learning prone personalities among adults of low educational attainment in an academic upgrading program in Toronto, Armstrong (cited in Cross, 1981) found that those rated as "high-learning adults" perceived themselves as reliable, tenacious, independent, open to new experiences, highly achievement motivated, and having broad interests. "Low-learning adults" characterized themselves as warm, friendly, masculine, conformist, and either complacently satisfied with or angrily resigned to their current life situations.

In summary, Lovell (1980) states

> there can be no easy straightforward generalisations about the needs and characteristics of the adult learner. Each individual is unique and his learning will be most effective when his personal strengths and weaknesses are acknowledged and taken into account (p. 120).

Learning Experience. Besides being comfortable and suitable to the students' physical needs, the learning atmosphere also needs to be warm and friendly, permitting freedom of expression without risking self esteem. In an environment of trust where adults are respected as adults, the learner can be accepted as a person with potential without threat to his own values, beliefs, and abilities.

Planning one's course of study should be a joint obligation for teacher and student. Students learn in response to their own needs, yet the instructor can aid in clarifying and setting realistic goals. With individualization of programs, instruction can begin "at the edge of the students' knowledge," (Lovell, 1980, p. 140) thus avoiding boring repetition of what is already known or omitting necessary elements.

In this type of program the instructor becomes a resource person, facilitating the learning and serving as an expert only when required or possessing some expertise (Hiemstra, 1976). Since "the way an individual perceives himself will have an important influence on how he approaches new learning experiences" and "the origins of self-perception lie in our interpretations of other people's perceptions of us," the encouraging, supporting instructor "can often have a significant influence when it comes to convincing a reluctant learner that he can cope with a learning task that he considers beyond his capacity" (Lovell, 1980, pp. 28-29). Rapport between teacher and student is crucial to keeping these voluntary learners in school. In addition, the individualized program avoids competition among classmates and measures accomplishment with the student's own previous performance.

Besides the individualized learning programs several other procedures

have been proven to work well with adults:

1. Self-paced learning to allow flexibility and use of the student's individual learning style.
2. Activity learning such as practice, discussion, and participation instead of passive methods; team learning in groups of no larger than five people; and the receive-recall-apply method.
3. Immediate feedback for the student to evaluate progress.
4. Frequent summarizing for retention, recall, and reinforcement.
5. Audio-visual aids for those at low educational levels who tend to avoid books, and workbooks for practice.
6. Presentation of a single idea at a time; division of large tasks into small units.
7. The relating of new material to what the student already knows and suggesting aids for its organization.
8. Clear statements of what is expected of the students and provision of written instructions for reference.
9. Memorization and recall from lectures, oral directions, and demonstrations at a minimum.
10. Avoidance of formal tests and chalkboard work which remind of past failure.
11. Prevention of errors when learning new material by constructing a situation in which it is difficult for the student to make mistakes.
12. Student correction of errors.
13. Minimization of distractions and interruptions which break the train of thought and cause forgetting.
14. Frequent rests with learning periods only 20 to 40 minutes long.

The Adult Dropout

Psychological Factors Relating to Attrition. Fay (1964) cites three psychological characteristics which play an important part in adult learning and which would have a direct effect on a student's persistance in an educational program. Adult dropouts may suffer from poor self-concepts. They underestimate their own abilities. Because they have failed in school before, they feel that this will inevitably happen again, even though in reality now they may be able to succeed. "The well-adjusted person tries to improve [his/her] inadequacies, while those who cannot accept themselves remain in a constant state of frustration" (p. 172). Often, erroneously, adults fear that their ability to learn declines with age. This along with changing physical appearance and loss of responsibility as children grow and leave home brings loss of confidence (Rogers, 1971). Those in lower socio-economic classes may feel that they are unable to rise above life's situation.

The adult learner, secondly, has needs which must be fulfilled. After the basics, such as food, sleep, and safety, come psychological needs--needs for community and economic status, vocational achievement, and success as a parent. Because adults have already passed a major portion of their lives, learning is usually focused toward short-term goals and quick returns.

A third psychological factor influencing learning is anxiety, either from the learning experience and situation itself or from outside factors such as work or family. Too much emotional stress can demoralize a student and interfere with learning.

Characteristics of the Dropout-Prone. In an effort to identify

potential dropouts, Wilson (1977) conducted a study to determine whether students who enroll in a General Educational Development (G.E.D. or high school equivalency) program and drop out before completion describe themselves differently from those who complete ten weeks of instruction or pass the G.E.D. in that time. The Adjective Check List by Gough was given to 142 subjects as part of the enrollment procedure. The dropouts' profiles tended to show themselves more rebellious, hostile, impulsive, headstrong, irresponsible, impatient, comfortable with disorder and change, and desirous of attention and authority; and less socialized, less able to give prolonged effort, less willing to subordinate themselves; indifferent to feelings and needs of others; assertive; and in need of more assistance than persistors. Those who completed the instruction described themselves as more obliging, tactful, diligent, practical, compliant, supportive, persevering, able to yield to reasonable requests of others, concerned about the needs of others, and more interested in stability and less interested in taking risks.

Several other researchers (Grosskopf, 1978; Hunter & Harman, 1979; LaCagnina, 1979; Moss, 1967) have listed characteristics common to those who drop out of A.B.E. classes. Those who voluntarily separate more often possess the following traits than those who persist. Academically, they have a history of low achievement and lack of success in school, a lower A.B.E. entry level, lower intelligence, low reading ability, have completed fewer grades in school and repeated more, and have thus concluded that meeting their goals would take too long. In fact, Cross (1981) states that the amount of formal schooling is the one variable which influences participation and interest in education more than any other.

Socially, they are members of a lower social class and may be downwardly mobile. Occupationally, they are part of a lower work class, change jobs more frequently, and receive lower pay than their counterparts. Usually under 40 or over 65, they are often uncertain about their values and goals and, therefore, are not motivated to continue.

In addition to supporting those characteristics listed above, Hiemstra (1976) adds the following which pertain to adult education courses in general. Those who drop out have fewer vocational skills, less success in work experiences and are often unemployed. Consequently, they are often non-homeowners, more mobile, and rely on public transportation. They also tend to have more withdrawal tendencies, a smaller circle of friends, and be minorities in an integrated learning environment.

While they agree that age, marital status, occupation, and educational level are significant factors differentiating persisters and non-persisters, Grosskopf (1978) adds number of dependents to the list and Hawkins (1968), motivation. Cross (1981) reinforces the need for a powerful motivating force such as the re-entry of women into the working world, becoming new parents, change of career, or retirement. If the motivation is not strong enough, other things can easily take precedence over education.

Described as a "creaming operation," Hunter and Harman (1979) allege that A.B.E.'s target population are those most in tune with middle class norms and school practice--unskilled laborers seeking better jobs, unemployed young adults, mothers wanting to help children, educated aliens, and aliens without documents highly motivated to find a better situation than that from which they fled. These people will have more

previous education and be more highly motivated to persist.

In addition, Carter (1979) studied the attitudes of A.B.E. pupils toward the A.B.E. program. Those who had spent more time in the program, females, older students, and those at higher educational levels had more positive attitudes toward the program and teachers than males and newer and younger students. Those who had left high school due to lack of interest or financial reasons had less positive attitudes than people who left for other reasons.

Causes of A.B.E. Attrition. Previous studies, often done in urban areas, provide many reasons given by both students and their instructors for dropping out. Leading the aggregate national list for fiscal year 1976 was "unknown reasons"--27.8% (NACAE, 1979). Dropping out is not always a sudden event; often it is a gradual process--the student attending class less and less often and the instructor uncertain when the final severance takes place. In urban areas often welfare and rehabilitation counselors have such large case loads that they are unable to keep in contact with the students and encourage them to remain in the program (Greenleigh, 1965).

Whether they are stated because they are indeed true or because they are more socially acceptable, non-school related reasons are the most prevalent causes stated for attrition. The single most often known reason is job related--conflict between work and class hours. Next on the list of non-school related reasons are child care, health, family problems, and moving; then, no transportation, not enough time, distance to class too far, financial problems, travel, apathy, and no need for more education. Concern for personal safety, lack of home security,

preparation for marriage, and no place to study have also been mentioned. Foreigners with little knowledge of English may leave to search for better economic and social opportunities. The role of part-time student, along with the roles of full-time spouse, parent, and employee, is a difficult load.

The single most often mentioned school related cause for attrition is "making no progress." Other much less often given reasons regard too difficult, too easy, or uninteresting subject matter; poor teaching; curriculum; materials; teachers' apparent disinterest in students; and time of class.

> there is no question that dissatisfaction with the educational experience is a major factor in attrition and poor attendance. Adults, unlike children, are not compelled to tolerate poor teaching. They can and do register their dissatisfaction by 'voting with their feet' (Darkenwald, 1975, p. 422).

The few studies which have included affective or attitudinal factors relating to attrition report the "blues" and being too old to learn as reasons for not participating in the A.B.E. program. Regardless and often unaware of the reason, society views the dropping out of school as a failure, and sensitive to this perception, many potential students will not enter an adult education program because they fear failing again (Cross, 1981).

Two studies suggest some interesting facts about the A.B.E. program. Collins (1980) cites Hunter and Harman as stating that federally funded A.B.E. and similar programs "should confine their efforts to those self-motivated adults who do not find traditional schooling too irksome" (p. 18). Darkenwald (1975) found that teacher race and curriculum affected the dropout rate. Black teachers instructing illiterate Black adults had

a markedly lower dropout rate than white teachers. Also, instructors who emphasized non-traditional functional learning such as consumer education, racial heritage, and job-getting skills and who could relate to students more closely were more successful at preventing dropouts than teachers who emphasized the three R's. Often middle-class teachers have had no real-life experience in the ghetto and poverty-stricken environments of the hard-core disadvantaged and are unable to understand the realities of the lives of students who do not view reading as a means of hope to change their situations (Hunter & Harman, 1979). These studies infer that many students drop out when the program does not relate to or fails to meet their needs.

Attrition in Related Areas

Causes of High School Attrition. Awareness of the history of the A.B.E. dropouts may help to understand the problem. The major common factor among these people is that they have a history of attrition. Nearly all have dropped out of school at least once before. For example, in one year alone, 45% of the students in New York City high schools dropped out before completion. An evening school was available for these students, but of those who attended, over 80% dropped out again before receiving a high school diploma (Hunt & Holt, 1979).

Reasons for leaving high school are usually complex. Academic failure is a major cause. Difficulties with reading and math, inability to memorize or retain information, and language problems are factors. Howard and Anderson (1978) cite the two most important predictors of dropping out as poor grades and being retained, especially in grades one, two, eight, and nine. Other school problems such as boredom,

lagging interest and motivation, uncaring teachers, irrelevant curricula, and trouble with school authorities aid the decision. An unstable and/or unsupportive home environment places stress on a student. Conflicts with and rebellion against parents, marriage, pregnancy, being a young parent, financial problems, a sick family member, employment, and broken homes can create this stressful environment. Contributing emotional factors include behavior problems, depression, and anxiety. Several social factors are common to high school dropouts. The student may be in trouble with the law; a girl may be going with an older boy who is out of school, and she does not fit into the school's social life; a boy may be working to support an automobile. Dropout friends who validate the student's worth and entice him/her to join the gang or positive contacts with parents and siblings who are also dropouts increase probabilities for the dropout-prone student. Health problems, especially dental and auditory, diminish concentration and learning along with psychological maladjustments. Often students who leave are members of the lower socioeconomic class who conflict with a middle class teacher or whose parents do not value education; thus culture may be a relevant factor. Even though education is "free," it costs. Many of these students cannot afford the yearbooks, class rings, workbooks, gymsuits, or athletic and extracurricular activities. They cannot conform to their peers in dress, leisure-time activities, and possessions (Carter, 1979; Howard & Anderson, 1978; Hunt & Holt, 1979; Hunt & Woods, 1979; Leppert, 1971; Rolfe & Wilson, 1979; Shipp, 1977).

Attrition in Other Non-Tuition and Low-Cost Adult Programs. Other adult education programs also experience retention problems. Wong and

Wong (1979), speaking of adult programs in general, report a 48% to 69% dropout rate while Roberts and Webb (1979) report dropout rates of 30% to 80% in various vocational and technical adult evening classes. The 60% withdrawal rate from City College of Chicago's television college courses may be a modest figure according to Duby and Giltrow (1978). More enrollees leave academic classes without completion than leave domestic, special interest, and non-vocational classes, whose dropout rate ranges from 11% to 26%.

Truesdell (1975), speaking of Manpower training in Canada, cites place of residence as the most frequent factor influencing dropout rate. It is higher where there are more employment opportunities. Van Dyke (1977) also found "job" to be the reason for many students' not completing technical education. The next most frequent factor is pretraining occupation. Those in service fields are more likely to leave. Golner's findings support these two factors (1980). The third factor is course satisfaction--those who find the course unhelpful do not complete. For students in tuition courses, cost of the program along with learning climate, method of instruction, and amount of personal attention influenced one's decision to leave (Van Dyke, 1977; Hiemstra, 1976). Again the implication emerges--subject matter must interest the student and be pertinent to his/her needs.

Summary

Most of the studies available gathered information from urban populations where the majority of A.B.E. students and centers are located. Not all A.B.E. programs, however, are in metropolitan areas. A limitation of this review of literature was that no research was found specifically

relating to those smaller centers located in rural districts and small towns.

The reasons for students' leaving A.B.E. programs before completion are not markedly different from those given by students dropping out of high school or other non-tuition and low-cost adult education programs. A great many have left for unknown causes, but of the known, previous and anticipated academic failure, irrelevance of school curricula, and non-school related job, family, and health problems stand out. Causes for attrition are usually multiple and complex, and, certainly, the pattern of "giving up when the going gets rough" or "something better comes along" describes these students. Although the A.B.E. program cannot solve these problems for the student, it can become more sensitive and understanding to the needs of the adult learner and do much to alleviate some of the causes.

students responded. Distribution of respondents among the five A.B.E. centers is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Distribution of Respondents Among Adult Basic Education Centers

Center	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents	Percent of Total Subjects
Genoa High School	39	47.8%	16.7%
Danbury High School	12	14.5%	5.2%
St. John's Lutheran Church	12	14.5%	5.2%
Port Clinton High School	11	13.3%	4.7%
Oak Harbor High School	9	10.8%	3.8%
Total	83	100.9%*	35.6%

*Total exceeds 100% because figures were rounded off.

Design and Instrumentation

The general design of the study was a survey of former A.B.E. students. Written questionnaires were chosen to gather information because names and addresses of subjects were available from student records; however, all subjects did not have telephones. Students who had moved would also receive the survey if a forwarding address had been left with the post office.

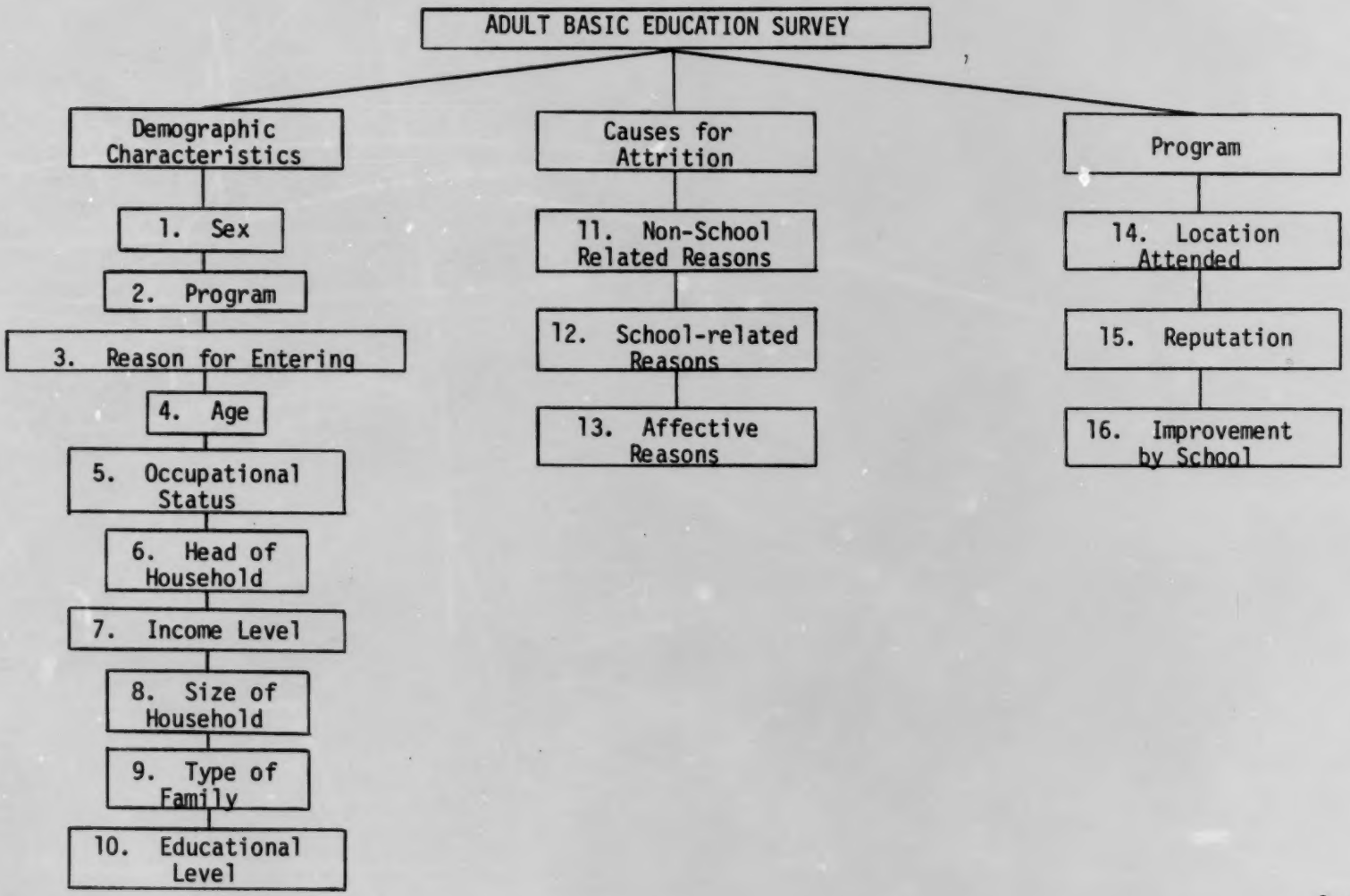
The instruments designed by the investigator for the survey were questionnaires sent to dropouts and completers of the A.B.E. program soliciting information to achieve the stated objectives (see Appendix A). Both forms contained questions regarding the subjects' demographic

characteristics (sex, age, educational level, income level, occupational status, type of family), reasons for entering A.B.E. classes, and evaluation of the program. In addition, dropouts were asked why they left the program before accomplishing their stated goals, while completers were asked if the same problems caused any difficulties for them even though they persisted and finished their studies. A model of this instrument is presented in Figure 1. Multiple choice items were selected to provide answer responses which the former students might be reluctant to volunteer and to facilitate statistical analysis. A.B.E. records provided data concerning educational level at the time of entry into the program.

To provide for confidentiality, subjects were asked not to identify themselves on the questionnaires which were number-coded so that subgroups could be identified. The instrument and cover letter were approved by the Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board as adequate to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects and to meet the standards for informed consent. The field test was made by Genoa A.B.E. students on April 27, 1981, and appropriate revisions were made.

The questionnaire, along with the cover letter explaining the nature and importance of the study in booklet form (see Appendix A) stamped and addressed for return, was mailed to each subject during the third week of May; a second mailing was sent to non-respondents during the second week of June. Since the researcher is an instructor in the Genoa A.B.E. program, to avoid subject bias the signature of the researcher's advisor, Dr. Patricia Erickson, was used on the cover letter, and questionnaires were returned to her.

Figure 1. Model of Questionnaire



CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to determine reasons for students dropping out of an Adult Basic Education program in an area of 10,000 or less population. The survey was conducted with former A.B.E. students in Ottawa County, Ohio, to determine whether both dropouts and completers experienced similar difficulties while attending class but reacted differently to them or whether the two groups experienced dissimilar circumstances. Secondary purposes were to determine whether the dropouts and completers differed significantly in certain demographic characteristics, to compare whether those dropouts who remained in the program longer (the registered) had different reasons for leaving than did those who left shortly after enrolling (the enrolled), to determine whether there was a relationship between the grade from which the former student had dropped out and educational level at the time of entry into A.B.E., and to discover the reputation of the program.

Data Analysis

A chi-square analysis was performed to determine any significantly different demographic characteristics between those who dropped out and those who completed Adult Basic Education programs, to discover whether the same problems which caused dropouts to leave the A.B.E. program also caused difficulties for those who completed, to compare the reasons for dropping out of the program between registered and enrolled students, and to determine the relationship between the former students' educational

levels at entry into the A.B.E. program to grade which they dropped out of previously. The .05 level was used to determine significance. Eighty-three usable questionnaires were returned; questions which were omitted by the respondents were treated as missing data.

Only one respondent listed moving as a cause for dropping out of the A.B.E. program; however, surveys were not sent to seven former English as a Second Language students who returned to their native countries. Since instructors stated that several non-respondents had moved also, the data from respondents may not be representative of the total accessible population.

Demographic Characteristics

Completers and dropouts were compared on several demographic characteristics for the purpose of compiling a profile of the dropout-prone student.

Five courses of study are offered to adults in the Adult Basic Education program: English as a Second Language (E.S.L.) for those whose native language is not English (speaking, reading, writing, and American culture are studied), preparation for the General Educational Development (G.E.D.) test to establish high school equivalency, preparation for the Licensed Practical Nursing (L.P.N.) school entrance examination, preparation for the written portion of the driver's license examination, and practice in the basic skills of reading, arithmetic, language, and everyday living skills.

Table 2 presents the distribution of subjects in each of the courses of study. All completers were in the G.E.D. program while dropouts were represented in all types of study. It must be stated, however, that the

E.S.L. and basic skills studies are generally open-ended programs--the students in these do not have a major completion mark such as passing of the G.E.D., L.P.N. entrance, or driving tests which completes the other programs. Students in E.S.L. and basic skills usually set short-term goals and add new ones when they are completed. Their program is one of continual improvement rather than termination when a test is passed.

TABLE 2

Completers and Dropouts According to Course of Study

Program	Completers	Dropouts
G.E.D.	100%	70.6%
Basic Skills	0%	15.7%
E.S.L.	0%	5.9%
L.P.N.	0%	5.9%
Driving	0%	2.0%

Table 3 shows how students anticipated that A.B.E. would help them. Since participants were permitted to mark several responses, the tally of responses is greater than the number of participants.

Chi-square analysis showed no significant contrasts between reasons given by completers for entering the program and those given by dropouts.

Table 4 presents a comparison of demographic data between dropouts and completers at the time they left A.B.E. Chi-square analysis found no significant differences between completers and dropouts in sex, age, employment, occupational status, income, size of household, family status, or educational level; however, the following observations can be made:

TABLE 3

Comparison of Completers to Dropouts in Reason for Entering the Adult Basic Education Program

Reason	Completers	Dropouts
Personal satisfaction	22	29
Get a better job	5	17
Prepare for more education	10	16
Get a job	5	10
Get along better in the community	1	4
Salary increase	1	3
Help my children	3	1

1. The percentage of males in the dropout group was more than twice as high as the percentage of males in the completer group.
2. A larger percentage of the completer group was women than of the dropouts.
3. Women composed a majority of students in both groups.
4. In both groups the largest percentage of participants was in the 30 to 39 age bracket; the second largest group was 40 and over.
5. In both groups the largest percentage of participants did not hold a job; the second largest had full-time jobs; and the smallest percentage had part-time jobs. The percentages between the dropout and completer groups were very similar.
6. While the greatest percentage in both groups showed some other household member to be the major wage-earner, this was the case for a greater number of subjects who completed than who dropped out.

TABLE 4

Comparison of Completers to Dropouts in Demographic Characteristics

Characteristics	Completers	Dropouts	Characteristics	Completers	Dropouts
Sex			Number of people in household		
Female	87.5%	70.6%	1-2	30.0%	32.6%
Male	12.5%	29.4%	3-4	33.3%	34.8%
			5 or more	36.7%	32.6%
Age					
16-24	3.1%	21.6%	Family status		
25-29	25.0%	19.6%	Two-parent family	53.1%	70.2%
30-39	40.6%	35.3%	One-parent family	21.9%	12.8%
40 and over	31.3%	23.5%	No children in residence	25.0%	17.0%
Employment			Educational level		
No job	46.9%	47.1%	Dropped out of school in grades 9-12	96.9%	82.0%
Full-time job	34.4%	37.3%			
Part-time job	18.8%	15.7%	Dropped out of school in grades 1-8	3.1%	18.0%
Household's major wage-earner					
Other household member	71.9%	62.7%			
Student	28.1%	37.3%			
Household income					
$ 0-$ 9,999	25.8%	34.0%			
$10,000-$14,999	25.8%	27.7%			
$15,000-$24,999	29.0%	21.3%			
$25,000 and over	19.4%	17.0%			

7. While incomes of both groups were spread among all levels, a larger percentage of completers earned more than $15,000 a year, a greater percentage of those who dropped out had incomes of less than $15,000.
8. The percentages of dropouts and completers were very similar in size of household; both were distributed quite evenly among the 1-2 member, 3-4 member, and 5 or more member households.
9. Although more than half the families in each group were two-parent families, a smaller percentage of the completers were. A larger percentage of the completers were one-parent families or had no children.
10. While 82% or more of each group dropped out of high school, the percentage of dropouts who left school in elementary or junior high school was almost six times as great as the percentage of completers who left in these years.

Chi-square analysis of demographic data found only one significant factor differentiating dropouts and completers (chi-square = 11.49, $p = <.05$)--that of program pursued; however, choices for this factor were not comparable because some courses of study had definite ending points while others did not.

Causes for Attrition

Identical lists of possible hinderances for attending A.B.E. classes were presented to all participants. Those who dropped out were asked to check the items which prevented them from continuing in the program while the completers were to mark those which caused difficulty while attending. Their responses which follow are presented in these categories:

non-school related, school related, and affective reasons.

Non-school Related Reasons

Table 5 presents the data gathered relating to non-school difficulties experienced by both dropouts and completers. Those problems which showed differences between the two groups at the .05 level in chi-square analysis were job and none of these.

Job. Distributions of study participants who said that job was a cause of difficulty were not the same in the dropout and in the completer populations. Of those who separated, 27.5% found it to be a problem, but only 6.5% of the completers had this conflict. Table 6 presents the analysis.

None of these. The two populations in this study did show an unequal distribution of persons who said that they had no difficulty with factors outside the school's control. More of those who completed, 61.3%, indicated that there were no situational problems to interfere with attendance, while only 19.6% of the dropouts found this to be true (Table 7).

School Related Reasons

Table 8 lists the responses of survey participants to choices of program development problems which may have caused difficulty while attending A.B.E. There was only one significant category to which completers and dropouts responded differently in this group of variables. That was the time at which classes were held.

Time of class. Table 9 shows the distribution of study participants who cited time of class as a problem in attending A.B.E. While nearly 17%

TABLE 5

Responses to Non-school Related Problems

Problem	Yes	No	Chi-square
Job			4.16*
Completers	6.5%	93.5%	
Dropouts	27.5%	72.5%	
Conflicts with other activities			3.75
Completers	0.0%	100.0%	
Dropouts	15.7%	84.3%	
Depressed; too much stress			3.06
Completers	0.0%	100.0%	
Dropouts	13.7%	86.3%	
Not enough time			1.24
Completers	19.4%	80.6%	
Dropouts	33.3%	66.7%	
No transportation			1.15
Completers	0.0%	100.0%	
Dropouts	7.8%	92.2%	
School too far away			0.59
Completers	0.0%	100.0%	
Dropouts	5.9%	94.1%	
Entered another school			0.14
Completers	0.0%	100.0%	
Dropouts	3.9%	96.1%	
Unsupportive family			0.14
Completers	0.0%	100.0%	
Dropouts	3.9%	96.1%	
Family problems			0.00
Completers	12.9%	87.1%	
Dropouts	11.8%	88.2%	
Child care problems			0.00
Completers	9.7%	90.3%	
Dropouts	9.8%	90.2%	
Health			0.00
Completers	9.7%	90.3%	
Dropouts	7.8%	92.2%	
Pregnancy			0.00
Completers	3.2%	96.8%	
Dropouts	3.9%	96.1%	
Cost			0.00
Completers	0.0%	100.0%	
Dropouts	2.0%	98.0%	
Moved			0.00
Completers	0.0%	100.0%	
Dropouts	2.0%	98.0%	
In trouble with the law			0.00
Completers	0.0%	100.0%	
Dropouts	0.0%	100.0%	
None of these			12.89**
Completers	61.3%	38.7%	
Dropouts	19.6%	80.4%	

*Significant at .05 level
**Significant at .01 level

TABLE 6

Job as a Cause of Difficulty

	Yes	No	Total
Completers	2	29	31
Dropouts	14	37	51
Total	16	66	82

Chi-square - 4.16
Degrees of freedom = 1
p = 0.04

TABLE 7

No Non-school Related Problem as Cause of Difficulty

	Yes	No	Total
Completers	19	12	31
Dropouts	10	41	51
Total	29	53	82

Chi-square = 12.89
Degrees of freedom = 1
p = .0003

TABLE 8

Program Development Problems

Problem	Yes	No	Chi-Square
Time of class			4.22*
Completers	0.0%	100.0%	
Dropouts	16.7%	83.3%	
Teacher			0.71
Completers	0.0%	100.0%	
Dropouts	6.3%	93.8%	
Location of class			0.71
Completers	0.0%	100.0%	
Dropouts	6.3%	93.8%	
Classroom			0.00
Completers	0.0%	100.0%	
Dropouts	2.1%	97.9%	
Other students			0.00
Completers	0.0%	100.0%	
Dropouts	2.1%	97.9%	
Rules and regulations			0.00
Completers	0.0%	100.0%	
Dropouts	0.0%	100.0%	

*Significant at .05 level

TABLE 9

Time of Class as Cause of Difficulty

	Yes	No	Total
Completers	0	32	32
Dropouts	8	40	48
Total	8	72	80

Chi-square = 4.22
Degrees of freedom = 1
p = 0.04

of those who dropped out found this to be a problem, none of those who completed did.

Table 10 summarizes the subjects' responses to questions regarding difficulties with teaching methods and materials. Dropouts and completers did not respond in significantly different ways to these items.

Table 11 presents the data gathered about the subjects taught in Adult Basic Education classes. There were no significant differences in distributions of the responses of dropouts and completers to questions about subject matter. Likewise, the two groups did not respond differently overall to school related problems as causing difficulty while attending class.

Affective Reasons

The summary of data about feelings which the former students had about both themselves and the program is shown in Table 12. Completers and dropouts responded differently in three areas regarding their personal feelings toward themselves and Adult Basic Education. A sense of not making progresss toward their goals, discouragement, and fear differentiated the two groups.

Lack of accomplishment. Table 13 shows that frequency of feeling lack of accomplishment while attending A.B.E. was significant at the .01 level. There were 27.1% of the dropouts, but only 3.1% of the completers, who felt that they were making no progress.

Discouraged. In this study, 20.8% of those who failed to complete became disheartened. None who finished listed this as a source of difficulty (see Table 14).

TABLE 10

Teaching Methods as School Related Problems

Problem	Yes	No	Chi-square
Could not write in books			1.88
Completers	18.8%	81.3%	
Dropouts	6.3%	93.8%	
Not enough personal attention			1.10
Completers	3.1%	96.9%	
Dropouts	12.5%	87.5%	
Teacher did not teach class as whole			0.00
Completers	6.3%	93.8%	
Dropouts	8.3%	91.7%	
Knew what was being taught			0.00
Completers	6.3%	93.8%	
Dropouts	6.3%	93.8%	
Disliked books			0.00
Completers	3.1%	96.9%	
Dropouts	4.2%	95.8%	
Too much homework			0.00
Completers	0.0%	100.0%	
Dropouts	0.0%	100.0%	
Not enough homework			0.00
Completers	0.0%	100.0%	
Dropouts	0.0%	100.0%	
Disliked kits			0.00
Completers	0.0%	100.0%	
Dropouts	0.0%	100.0%	
Disliked machines			0.00
Completers	0.0%	100.0%	
Dropouts	0.0%	100.0%	
Disliked worksheets			0.00
Completers	0.0%	100.0%	
Dropouts	0.0%	100.0%	

TABLE 11

Subject Matter as School Related Problems

Problem	Yes	No	Chi-square
Subjects too easy			0.71
Completers	0.0%	100.0%	
Dropouts	6.3%	93.8%	
Subjects not useful in everyday life			0.69
Completers	9.4%	90.6%	
Dropouts	18.8%	81.3%	
Subjects or class not interesting			0.00
Completers	6.3%	93.8%	
Dropouts	4.2%	95.8%	
Subjects too hard			0.00
Completers	0.0%	100.0%	
Dropouts	2.1%	97.9%	
Disliked subjects			0.00
Completers	0.0%	100.0%	
Dropouts	0.0%	100.0%	
No school related problem			2.59
Completers	68.8%	31.3%	
Dropouts	47.9%	52.1%	

TABLE 12

Affective Problems

Problem	Yes	No	Chi-square
Lack of accomplishment			6.06**
Completers	3.1%	96.9%	
Dropouts	27.1%	72.9%	
Discouraged			5.83*
Completers	0.0%	100.0%	
Dropouts	20.8%	79.2%	
Scared			3.96*
Completers	12.5%	87.5%	
Dropouts	0.0%	100.0%	
Confused			2.71
Completers	0.0%	100.0%	
Dropouts	12.5%	87.5%	
Felt dumb			2.00
Completers	12.5%	87.5%	
Dropouts	2.1%	97.9%	
Uncomfortable			1.33
Completers	0.0%	100.0%	
Dropouts	8.3%	91.7%	
Lack of direction			0.71
Completers	0.0%	100.0%	
Dropouts	6.3%	93.8%	
Too long to finish			0.28
Completers	6.3%	93.8%	
Dropouts	12.5%	87.5%	
Difficulty reading and writing assignments			0.22
Completers	3.1%	96.9%	
Dropouts	8.3%	91.7%	
Too old			0.13
Completers	6.3%	93.8%	
Dropouts	2.1%	97.9%	
Felt could not pass			0.13
Completers	6.3%	93.8%	
Dropouts	2.1%	97.9%	
Could not remember			0.00
Completers	12.5%	87.5%	
Dropouts	14.6%	85.4%	
Lack of study skills			0.00
Completers	6.3%	93.8%	
Dropouts	6.3%	93.8%	
Too much stress			0.00
Completers	3.1%	96.9%	
Dropouts	4.2%	95.8%	
Could not sit that long			0.00
Completers	3.1%	96.9%	
Dropouts	4.2%	95.8%	
Embarrassed			0.00
Completers	3.1%	96.9%	
Dropouts	2.1%	97.9%	

TABLE 12 (continued)

Problem	Yes	No	Chi-square	Problem	Yes	No	Chi-square
Too young			0.00	Could not hear			0.00
Completers	0.0%	100.0%		Completers	0.0%	100.0%	
Dropouts	2.1%	97.9%		Dropouts	2.1%	97.9%	
Could not see			0.00	None of these			1.75
Completers	0.0%	100.0%		Completers	59.4%	40.6%	
Dropouts	2.1%	97.9%		Dropouts	41.7%	58.3%	

*Significant at .05 level
**Significant at .01 level

TABLE 13

Lack of Progress Toward Goals as Cause of Difficulty

	Yes	No	Total
Completers	1	31	32
Dropouts	13	35	48
Total	14	66	80

Chi-square = 6.06
Degrees of freedom = 1
p = 0.01

TABLE 14

Discouragement as a Cause of Difficulty

	Yes	No	Total
Completers	0	32	32
Dropouts	10	38	48
Total	10	70	80

Chi-square = 5.83
Degrees of freedom = 1
p = 0.02

Scared. The two groups did respond in significantly different ways to fear as a cause of difficulty as shown in Table 15. Of those who successfully finished, 12.5% expressed that they had experienced feelings of fear during the course of their studies, while none of those who dropped out viewed this as a reason for separation.

TABLE 15

Fear as a Cause of Difficulty

	Yes	No	Total
Completers	4	28	32
Dropouts	0	48	48
Total	4	76	80

Chi-square = 3.96
Degrees of freedom = 1
p = 0.05

To summarize souces of difficulty for former students in the A.B.E. program, completers and dropouts responded similarly to 87.9% of the choices. They differed significantly on only six of 58 possibilities. Discouragement and conflicts with job and time of class (p = .05) and lack of accomplishment (p = .01) were more frequently found among the dropouts. Fear (p = .05) and having no non-school related problems (p = .01) were more often experienced by those who completed.

Registered vs. Enrolled Dropouts' Reasons

To determine whether length of time one participated in the Adult Basic Education program had any bearing on cause for attrition, a

further analysis was made within the group of dropouts. Reasons given by registered dropouts (those who had spent 12 hours or more in the program) were compared to those given by enrolled dropouts (those who had attended less than 12 hours). Tables 16, 17, and 18 list the frequency of responses by each group to causes for leaving.

Chi-square analysis of the data showed no significant differences in patterns of response in reasons for separation from the program between those who had participated in the A.B.E. program less than 12 hours and those who attended 12 hours or more.

Program Improvement

To gather the former students' suggestions for program improvement, dropouts were asked "Could the school have done anything to help you stay in A.B.E.?" while the question to completers was phrased "Could the school have done anything to make your experience in A.B.E. class better?" Table 19 lists the responses.

Survey participants were also given the opportunity to respond subjectively by making suggestions for improvement. Those recommendations, which are individual replies unless otherwise noted, are listed below to show the types of proposals made.

1. Have evening hours
2. Have day class
3. Have classes every day and night
4. Have summer class
5. Give more personal attention (3 responses)
6. Make assignments interesting for all levels (2 responses)
7. Move at a slower pace

TABLE 16

Comparison of Registered to Enrolled Dropouts in Non-school Related Causes for Attrition

Cause	Yes	No	Chi-square
Cost			0.76
Registered	0.0%	100.0%	
Enrolled	12.5%	87.5%	
Family problems			0.62
Registered	7.9%	92.1%	
Enrolled	25.0%	75.0%	
Depressed; too much stress			0.39
Registered	15.8%	84.2%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	
Conflicts with other activities			0.28
Registered	10.5%	89.5%	
Enrolled	25.0%	75.0%	
No transportation			0.07
Registered	10.5%	89.5%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	
Not enough time			0.00
Registered	34.2%	65.8%	
Enrolled	37.5%	62.5%	
Job			0.00
Registered	31.6%	68.4%	
Enrolled	25.0%	75.0%	
Child care problems			0.00
Registered	10.5%	89.5%	
Enrolled	12.5%	87.5%	
Health			0.00
Registered	7.9%	92.1%	
Enrolled	12.5%	87.5%	
Pregnancy			0.00
Registered	5.3%	94.7%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	
Entered another school			0.00
Registered	5.3%	94.7%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	
School too far away			0.00
Registered	5.3%	94.7%	
Enrolled	12.5%	87.5%	
Moved			0.00
Registered	2.6%	97.4%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	
Unsupportive family			0.00
Registered	2.6%	97.4%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	

TABLE 16 (continued)

Cause	Yes	No	Chi-square	Cause	Yes	No	Chi-square
In trouble with the law			0.00	No non-school reason			0.00
Registered	0.0%	100.0%		Registered	18.4%	81.6%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%		Enrolled	12.5%	87.5%	

TABLE 17

Comparison of Registered to Enrolled Dropouts in School Related Causes for Attrition

Cause	Yes	No	Chi-square
Program Development			
Time of class			0.04
Registered	16.7%	83.3%	
Enrolled	28.6%	71.4%	
Location of class			0.00
Registered	5.6%	94.4%	
Enrolled	14.3%	85.7%	
Teacher			0.00
Registered	2.8%	97.2%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	
Classroom			0.00
Registered	2.8%	97.2%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	
Other students			0.00
Registered	2.8%	97.2%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	
Rules and regulations			0.00
Registered	0.0%	100.0%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	
Methods and Materials			
Could not write in books			0.00
Registered	8.3%	91.7%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	
Methods and materials (cont'd)			
Not enough personal attention			0.00
Registered	8.3%	91.7%	
Enrolled	14.3%	85.7%	
Teacher did not teach class as whole			0.00
Registered	8.3%	91.7%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	
Disliked books			0.00
Registered	5.6%	94.4%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	
Knew what was being taught			0.00
Registered	5.6%	94.4%	
Enrolled	14.3%	85.7%	
Too much homework			0.00
Registered	0.0%	100.0%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	
Not enough homework			0.00
Registered	0.0%	100.0%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	

TABLE 17 (continued)

Problem	Yes	No	Chi-square
Methods and materials (cont'd)			
Disliked kits			0.00
Registered	0.0%	100.0%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	
Disliked machines			0.00
Registered	0.0%	100.0%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	
Disliked worksheets			0 00
Registered	0.0%	100.0%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	
Subject matter			
Subjects not useful in everyday life			0.00
Registered	19.4%	80.6%	
Enrolled	28.6%	71.4%	
Subjects too easy			0.00
Registered	8.3%	91.7%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	
Subject matter (cont'd)			
Subjects or class not interesting			0.00
Registered	5.6%	94.4%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	
Subjects too hard			0.00
Registered	2.8%	97.2%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	
Disliked subjects			0.00
Registered	0.0%	100.0%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	
None of these			0.00
Registered	50.0%	50.0%	
Enrolled	42.9%	57.1%	

TABLE 18

Comparison of Registered to Enrolled Dropouts in Affective Causes for Attrition

Cause	Yes	No	Chi-square
Could not remember			0.51
Registered	19.4%	80.6%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	
Too long to finish			0.39
Registered	11.1%	88.9%	
Enrolled	28.6%	71.4%	
Lack of accomplishment			0.12
Registered	27.8%	72.2%	
Enrolled	42.9%	57.1%	
Uncomfortable			0.12
Registered	2.8%	97.2%	
Enrolled	14.3%	85.7%	
Difficulty reading and writing assignments			0.05
Registered	11.1%	88.9%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	
Discouraged			0.04
Registered	16.7%	83.3%	
Enrolled	28.6%	71.4%	
Confused			0.00
Registered	11.1%	88.9%	
Enrolled	14.3%	85.7%	
Lack of study skills			0.00
Registered	8.3%	91.7%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	
Too much stress			0.00
Registered	5.6%	94.4%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	
Lack of direction			0.00
Registered	5.6%	94.4%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	
Too old			0.00
Registered	2.8%	97.2%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	
Too young			0.00
Registered	2.8%	97.2%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	
Felt dumb			0.00
Registered	2.8%	97.2%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	
Embarrassed			0.00
Registered	2.8%	97.2%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	

TABLE 18 (continued)

Cause	Yes	No	Chi-square	Cause	Yes	No	Chi-square
Could not see			0.00	Felt could not pass			0.00
Registered	2.8%	97.2%		Registered	2.8%	97.2%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%		Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	
Could not hear			0.00	Scared			0.00
Registered	2.8%	97.2%		Registered	0.0%	100.0%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%		Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%	
Could not sit that long			0.00	None of these			0.00
Registered	2.8%	97.2%		Registered	44.4%	55.6%	
Enrolled	0.0%	100.0%		Enrolled	42.9%	57.1%	

TABLE 19

A.B.E. Program Improvement

	Yes	No
Can the school improve its program?		
Completers	23.3%	76.7%
Dropouts	30.6%	69.4%

8. Do not teach so many subjects at one time
9. Do not give work unnecessary for the G.E.D. test
10. Teach the class as a whole
11. Relate subjects to everyday life
12. Permit students to write in the books
13. Give assignments and test on them
14. Do not teach what the student already knows
15. Permit study at home
16. Have larger classes
17. Permit books to be taken home
18. Offer a better reading and writing program
19. Offer a program for those with dyslexia
20. Guarantee the length of the course
21. Publicize and explain the program more and better (2 responses)
22. Give the G.E.D. test closer to Genoa
23 Give gas money
24. Talk to unsupportive spouse

Additional comments made by the study participants about the A.B.E. program are contained in Appendix B.

Previous vs. Current Educational Levels

An additional analysis was made to determine whether the grade level from which a subject previously dropped out of school showed any relationship to his educational level at time of entry into the A.B.E. program. Specifically, whether completion of less than eight grades and completion of eight to twelve grades was compared to A.B.E. entry level (0-8 grade) and G.E.D. entry level (9-12 grade) on diagnostic inventories when enrolling in the Adult Basic Education program. Chi-square analysis does not show a significant relationship between the grade of school previously completed and educational level upon entrance to the A.B.E. program.

Reputation of the Program

All subjects were asked "Did the A.B.E. program have a good reputation?" Responses listed in Table 20 show that a large majority of survey participants felt that it did.

TABLE 20

Reputation of Adult Basic Education as Perceived by Former Students

	Yes	No
Did the A.B.E. program have a good reputation?	96.3%	3.8%

Summary

To summarize these findings, dropouts and completers in this study tended to be quite similar in the demographic traits questioned. Only six reasons for separation or sources of difficulty while attending

contrasted the two groups. Those who withdrew more often cited conflicts with job and time of class, felt discouraged and lack of accomplishment. Those who completed more often reported no situational (non-school related) problems but did experience feelings of fear. No significant differences in causes for separation between enrolled and registered dropouts were found, and the participants' previous and present educational levels were not significantly related. Nearly all former students agreed, however, that the A.B.E. program did have a good reputation.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Summary

This study was prompted by an Adult Basic Education Advisory Committee of students in Ottawa County, Ohio. These students, being concerned that so many of their fellow classmates failed to complete studies and did not have the positive experience they had in reaching their goals, suggested that dropouts be contacted to determine why they had left and to encourage them to return to the A.B.E. program.

With 50 to 60 million functionally illiterate adults living in a nation of rapidly changing technology, it is essential that an opportunity for these people to be educated at least to everyday functional levels be provided. It is also essential to the nation that these illiterates take advantage of this opportunity. The Adult Basic Education program, set up for this purpose, has a dropout rate of up to 60%. The program and all factors related to it should be evaluated to determine whether the funds authorized by Congress are being spent wisely. This descriptive study addressed one phase of such an evaluation--causes for attrition in non-urban areas and cities of less than 10,000. This knowledge can then be used to improve the program and possibly decrease the number of students who find it necessary to drop out.

A review of the literature shows that several studies have been done on adult education dropouts; however, this researcher found no investigation done specifically on A.B.E. students who left programs that were located in small towns and rural areas. All studies located had been

conducted in large metropolitan areas. In order to determine whether different factors for attrition influenced residents of urban/innercity areas and residents of less densely populated areas, this study was carried out.

The participants lived and attended A.B.E. classes in Ottawa County, Ohio, between September 1977 and March 1981. The eighty-three respondents included both dropouts and completers from the A.B.E. program so that, in addition to comparing the reasons for attrition of Ottawa County students and urban students, it could also be determined whether those who completed experienced similar difficulties but were able to cope or adjust while dropouts could not. The survey gathered information in three areas: demographic data, causes for attrition, and reputation of the program.

Chi-square analysis was used to analyze the data. A summary of the results is as follows:

1. There were no significant differences between dropouts and completers in demographic characteristics except in type of program pursued. All completers were studying for the G.E.D. test while dropouts were found in all courses--G.E.D., E.S.L., L.P.N., driving, and basic skills. The programs, however, were not comparable since some had definite ending points while others did not.
2. Significant differences were found between dropouts and completers regarding causes for separation or difficulty while attending. Those who did not finish their programs more frequently cited conflicts with job and time of class, felt discouraged and lack of progress. Those who completed were

more likely to report no situational problems yet some did express feelings of fear.

3. There were no significant differences in causes for separation between registered and enrolled dropouts.
4. There was no significant relationship between the grade of school previously completed and educational level at the time of entrance into the A.B.E. program.
5. The A.B.E. program was felt to have a good reputation by nearly all of the former students.

Conclusions

The findings of this study provide evidence that the problems of A.B.E. students in the small town/rural areas are similar to those of students in more densely populated areas. The review of literature states that conflict between work and class hours was the most often known reason for separation from A.B.E., and the participants in this study also indicated that job was a significant cause of difficulty. The percentage of dropouts who found that employment and school conflicted was over four times as great as the percentage of completers reporting it to be a problem.

It was also the dropouts who listed time of class as a difficulty; completers did not find this factor to be a problem. A large majority (all but one) of those who listed job or time of class or both as a source of difficulty held jobs in addition to regular household duties. The majority of these were employed full time. Although it cannot be stated that all were bound to jobs at the same time class met, it can be concluded that the additional time left for studies was minimal. And

since the employment provided income to meet lower order needs, according to Maslow's (1943) hierarchy, the schooling was sacrificed.

Eighty percent of the dropouts cited some non-school causes of difficulty, while only 39% of the completers did. Of those (both completers and dropouts) who cited situational factors, only 23% were able to make adjustments and continue while 77% were unable to adjust. External factors posed difficulties for a much greater portion of those who found it necessary to discontinue studies.

Lack of accomplishment was reported as a major cause for attrition in previous research and also significantly differentiated dropouts from completers in this study. While only 3.1% of the completers reported this frustration, 27.1% of the dropouts said it was one of the reasons for leaving the program. In addition, making no progress could possibly have been one of the reasons for discouragement, another significant factor reported by no completers, but by 20.8% of the dropouts. Although not significant in this study, several respondents who marked lack of accomplishment, discouragement, or both also said they could not remember what they had learned and some reported they did not know how to study. Perhaps, further research might find these four factors closely related.

On the contrary, it was individuals who were completers who expressed fear as a problem while working toward their goals. Since there was no delineation of possible sources for the feeling, there can be only speculation that the fear might have been fear of taking the G.E.D. test; nevertheless, these students were able to overcome the fear.

In previous research, there were many possible causes given for attrition; among them were school rules and regulations, too much and not

enough homework, dislike of teaching materials and subjects, and legal difficulties. In this study, however, not one of the respondents listed these as reasons for separation.

The findings of this study, then, which replicated factors for attrition in previous research were job, time of class, and lack of accomplishment. There being no external cause and discouragement were not mentioned often as sources of difficulty among dropouts in other investigations, and fear among those who completed was not reported.

Demographic characteristics of dropouts and completers were gathered so that a profile of the dropout-prone could be drawn. The specific traits described in this study, however, were not found to be significantly different between those who completed and those who did not. For this reason, a profile of those most likely to drop out could not be made.

Regardless of the reason for separation, the A.B.E. program in Ottawa County had a good reputation as perceived by nearly all former students participating in this research.

Implications

From the information gathered, several possibilities for improvement may be projected so that Adult Basic Education can meet the needs of a greater number of undereducated adults in areas with small populations. Even though many of the completers in this study stated that they had no non-school conflicts, the program must be made so strong and important for those participants who do that it is a viable competitor against outside problems, and the student does not lightly make the decision to leave.

In response to the dropouts' conflict with job and time of class, the following proposals are made.

1. Provide morning, afternoon, and possibly weekend classes as well as evening hours in more locations.
2. Encourage students to investigate the possibility of employers' granting released time for education.
3. Investigate the possibility of establishing mini-A.B.E. centers at local businesses and industries.

Sensitivity to students' affective needs must be an important trait of any instructor, but especially to one who hopes to retain adult students. Alleviating feelings of discouragement and lack of progress, which this study showed to be major causes of attrition, thus become responsibilities which the school should assume. In response to these needs, the following suggestions are given.

1. With each student set a series of realistic short-term objectives so that long range goals do not seem insurmountable.
2. Ease students into their studies gradually with encouragement and extra help so that many small successes may result.
3. Regard students' lack of knowledge as a temporary state and instill the faith that they are capable of learning.
4. Make a list of objectives and charts of progress so that the student can cross off learned skills and visibly see accomplishment.
5. Evaluate each student's progress regularly and discuss it with him/her. If a large class prohibits one from using instructional time for this, review the student's work and progress outside class, making notes for later discussion.
6. Give incentives or awards for successfully completing units of study.

Since this study indicated that those who persist sometimes feel scared, actions must be taken to build confidence and diminish this fear. Possibilities for allaying this apprehension could include:

1. Provide frequent formal evaluation experiences during the course of study to familiarize the student with time limits, answer sheets, pressure, and the like.
2. Discuss and practice test-taking strategies so that the student can make use of such techniques as elimination, educated guessing, and recognizing key phrases and clues.
3. Use several practice G.E.D. tests so that the students become familiar with the format and see their passing scores.
4. Shower the students with sincere praise and "positive strokes" so that they begin to believe in themselves.
5. Emphasize the positive, what the students can do, and the number of items correct rather than what they cannot do or the number wrong.
6. Invite former students who have passed the G.E.D. test to return and tell about their experiences and answer questions.
7. Direct the students' attention to goals beyond the G.E.D. test so that completing the immediate examination becomes a necessary first step for future accomplishment.
8. Study or invite a consultant to speak about stress and fear and ways to make these emotions manageable.

Although some students separate from A.B.E. for reasons beyond the school's control, there are many ways in which the program can become more sensitive to student frustrations and adapt to individual needs.

Suggestions for Further Research

In order to understand better the Adult Basic Education students and those factors which pose difficulties to them while attending class, the following suggestions are made.

1. More research needs to be done among A.B.E. participants from less densely populated areas so that broader generalizations about them can be made in comparison to innercity students.
2. Study of the relationship of other demographic characteristics to those who separate and those who persist could provide information necessary to identify the dropout-prone.
3. Sources of fear among students who have completed studies should be investigated so that these students may move through their studies with less frustration.
4. A comparison of those undereducated adults who do not participate in A.B.E. programs with those who do could supply information to make the program more appealing to those for whom it was established.
5. Research comparing and contrasting male with female students in terms of their reasons for entering and dropping out, completion rate, and program impact could provide information so that the A.B.E. program, whose students are predominately female, could more adequately serve its potential male population.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Survey Questionnaires

Questionnaire to Completers

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION SURVEY

Patricia M. Erickson

201 Johnston Hall

Bowling Green State University

Bowling Green, OH 43403

Spring '81

Dear Former Adult Basic Education Student,

We're proud of you! We hope that your completing some of your educational goals through the Ottawa County Adult Basic Education program has been just the beginning of a series of successes for you.

Now a study is being conducted through Bowling Green State University and Port Clinton City Schools (who gave us your name) to see how the ABE program can be improved. We'd like to know a little more about those who persist and complete the goals they set for themselves.

You can help us by answering the questions on the enclosed survey. Do not sign your name. Your answers will be kept confidential; only group data, no person's name, will be reported.

Please help your schools to serve your community better by answering these questions and returning the survey by May 27. Just staple or tape this booklet closed and drop it in the mailbox. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Patricia M. Erickson

Patricia M. Erickson

Adult Basic Education Survey

PUT A CHECK (✓) IN FRONT OF YOUR ANSWERS.

1. I am a

__ Man __ Woman

2. Why did you come to ABE class? (Mark only one answer.)

__ To learn English because I speak another language (E

__ To study for the G.E.D. (high school equivalency) te

__ To study for the L.P.N. entrance test

__ To study for the driving test

__ To improve my reading, arithmetic, writing

3. How did you think this would help you?

__ Personal satisfaction

__ Salary increase

__ Prepare for more education

__ Help my children

__ Get a job

__ Get a better job

__ Get along better in my community

4. When you completed ABE, how old were you?

__ 16 - 24 __ 40 - 44

__ 25 - 29 __ 45 - 49

__ 30 - 39 __ 50 or older

5. When you were in ABE, did you have a job besides household duties?

__ No

__ Part-time __ Full-time

6. Were you the major wage-earner in your household when you were in ABE?

__ Yes __ No

7. What was your entire household's income when you were in ABE?

__ $0 - $4,999 __ $10,000 - $14,999

__ $5,000 - $7,499 __ $15,000 - $24,999

__ $7,500 - $9,999 __ $25,000 or more

8. How many people did this income support?

__ 1 - 2 __ 5 - 6

__ 3 - 4 __ 7 or more

9. Which best describes your family when you were in ABE?

__ A one-parent family

__ A two-parent family

__ I had no children living with me

10. What grade were you in when you dropped out of grade school or high school?

__ Never went to school

__ 1 - 6 __ 9 - 12

__ 7 - 8 __ Graduated from high school

11. Were any of these problems for you while attending ABE class? (Mark no more than 3.)

__ My job __ Babysitting problems

__ Pregnancy __ Cost of school

__ My health __ Distance to school

__ Moving __ Depression; stress

__ Transportation __ In trouble with the law

__ Not enough time __ Conflicts with other activities

__ Family problems __ Family did not want me to come

__ Attending another school or class, too __ None of these

12. Did any of these cause difficulties for you while you were in ABE class?

__ Teacher __ Other students

__ Time of class __ Location of class

__ Classroom __ Rules and regulations

__ Too much homework __ Not enough personal attention

__ Not enough homework __ I already knew what was being taught

__ Disliked books __ Could not write in the books

__ Disliked kits __ Disliked worksheets

__ Disliked machines __ Subjects too easy

__ Disliked subjects __ Subjects too hard

__ Subjects or class not interesting __ Subjects not useful in everyday life

__ Teacher didn't teach whole class together __ None of these

13. Did you have any of these feelings when you were in ABE class? (Mark no more than 3.)

__ Too old	__ Too young
__ Dumb	__ Embarrassed
__ Confused	__ Scared
__ Discouraged	__ Uncomfortable
__ Too much stress	__ Couldn't sit that long
__ Couldn't see	__ Couldn't hear
__ I couldn't pass	__ I didn't know how to study
__ It would take too long to finish	__ I wasn't accomplishing anything
__ I could not remember what I had learned	__ I didn't know what I was to do
__ I had trouble reading and writing the assignments	__ None of these

14. Where did you attend ABE class?

__ Danbury	__ Oak Harbor
__ Genoa	__ Port Clinton, St. John's Lutheran Church
__ Port Clinton High School	

15. Did the ABE program have a good reputation?

__ Yes __ No

16. Could the school have done anything to make your experience in ABE class better?

__ No

__ Yes What? _____

If you would like to say anything more about ABE classes, please write it on the facing page. Then staple or tape this booklet closed and drop it in the mail.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP.

Questionnaire to Dropouts

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION SURVEY

Patricia M. Erickson

201 Johnston Hall

Bowling Green State University

Bowling Green, OH 43403

Spring '81

Dear Former Adult Basic Education Student,

Would you help by answering the questions on the "Adult Basic Education Survey"? In these times of budget cuts and inflation, we want to make sure that we get the most for our tax money. This includes education.

Each year several ABE students drop out of class before they reach their goals. In this study, being conducted in Ottawa County through Bowling Green State University and Port Clinton City Schools (who gave us your name), we want to see how ABE classes can be improved. Your help is very important because you were in the program recently and can tell us first-hand about why you left school.

You can help us by answering the questions on the enclosed survey. Do not sign your name. Your answers will be kept confidential; only group data, no person's name, will be reported.

Please help your schools to serve your community better by answering these questions and returning the survey by May 27. Just staple or tape this booklet closed and drop it in the mailbox. We look forward to hearing what you have to say.

Sincerely,

Patricia M. Erickson

Patricia M. Erickson

Adult Basic Education Survey

PUT A CHECK (✓) IN FRONT OF YOUR ANSWERS.

1. I am a

__ Man __ Woman

2. I came to ABE class to (Mark only one answer.)

__ Learn English because I speak another language (ESL)

__ Study for the G.E.D. (high school equivalency) test

__ Study for the L.P.N. entrance test

__ Study for the driving test

__ Improve my reading, arithmetic, writing or everyday living skills

3. How did you think this would help you?

__ Personal satisfaction

__ Salary increase

__ Prepare for more education

__ Help my children

__ Get a job

__ Get a better job

__ Get along better in my community

4. When you left ABE, how old were you?

__ 16 - 24 __ 40 - 44

__ 25 - 29 __ 45 - 49

__ 30 - 39 __ 50 or older

5. When you left ABE, did you have a job besides household duties?

__ No

__ Part-time __ Full-time

6. Were you the major wage-earner in your household when you left ABE?

__ Yes __ No

7. What was your entire household's income when you left ABE?

__ $0 - $4,999 __ $10,000 - $14,999

__ $5,000 - $7,499 __ $15,000 - $24,999

__ $7,500 - $9,999 __ $25,000 or more

8. How many people did this income support?

__ 1 - 2 __ 5 - 6

__ 3 - 4 __ 7 or more

9. Which best describes your family when you left ABE?

__ A one-parent family

__ A two-parent family

__ I had no children living with me

10. What grade were you in when you dropped out of grade school or high school?

__ Never went to school

__ 1 - 6 __ 9 - 12

__ 7 - 8 __ Graduated from high school

11. Why did you stop going to ABE class? (Mark no more than 3.)

__ My job __ Babysitting problems

__ Pregnancy __ Couldn't afford school

__ My health __ School too far away

__ Moved __ Depressed; too much stress

__ No transportation __ In trouble with the law

__ Not enough time __ Conflicts with other activities

__ Family problems __ My family did not want me to come

__ I entered another school __ None of these

12. Did any of these cause to drop out of ABE? (Mark no more than 3.)

__ Teacher __ Other students

__ Time of class __ Location of class

__ Classroom __ Rules and regulations

__ Too much homework __ Not enough personal attention

__ Not enough homework __ I already knew what was being taught

__ Disliked books __ Could not write in books

__ Disliked kits __ Disliked worksheets

__ Disliked machines __ Subjects too easy

__ Disliked subjects __ Subjects too hard

__ Subjects or class not interesting __ Subjects not useful in everyday life

__ Teacher didn't teach whole class together __ None of these

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13. Did you drop out because you felt (Mark no more than 3.)

__ Too old	__ Too young
__ Dumb	__ Embarrassed
__ Confused	__ Scared
__ Discouraged	__ Uncomfortable
__ Too much stress	__ Couldn't sit that long
__ Couldn't see	__ Couldn't hear
__ You couldn't pass	__ You didn't know how to study
__ It would take too long to finish	__ You weren't accomplishing anything
__ You could not remember what you had learned	__ You didn't know what you were to do
__ You had trouble reading and writing the assignments	__ None of these

14. Where did you attend ABE class?

__ Danbury	__ Oak Harbor
__ Genoa	__ Port Clinton, St. John's Lutheran Church
__ Port Clinton High School	

15. Did the ABE program have a good reputation?

__ Yes __ No

16. Could the school have done anything to help you stay in ABE?

__ No

__ Yes What? _____

If the reason you left ABE has not been listed or you would like to say anything more about the classes, please write it on the next page. Then staple or tape this booklet closed and drop it in the mail.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP.

APPENDIX B

Additional Comments from Former Students

All participants were given the opportunity to write comments in addition to answering the questionnaire. Their remarks, unedited, are listed below.

From the Dropouts:

1. "Would still like to get my diploma"

2. "Some Day I would like to try it again."

3. "I would still like to finish if possible."

4. "I went to a few classes & found the material very easy, so I went ahead & took the test & passed at Port Clinton, Ohio, High School."

5. "I attended A.B.E. for almost a year. I could have taken my test at almost anytime but I liked it so well, I kept putting it off. Then I got a job at a Nursing Home and working the 3-11 shift kept me from going back. Which I found out later, I could have requested those nights for school.

"Our teacher encouraged me several times to return. I still want to and one day I will. _____ is really a great teacher as well as a great person.

"Thank you for including me in the A.B.E. Survey."

6. "My main reason for not completing the ABE program was that you

had to have algebra and geometry on the final test, which I think is unnessary because in high school to get a diploma, you aren't required to take these math courses."

7. "I feel that the problem with ABE classes in _____ was too much confusion. With everyone in class being at a different level there were too many problems, in various subjects being discussed at all times. This made studying very difficult because you were always aware of everyone else's problems and this often detered your own progress."

8. "I felt it was a distraction when the children in the rooms next to us, wear filled the air sounds of fun and games sorry but I could not concintrate on aneything but, the coffie and doughts they served us their thanks alot and I learned a lot abouts myself."

9. "I really enjoyed going to ABE, and I want so much to get my GED, the reason I dropped out of ABE is because I was having family problems, and also with what money I get from ADC, an by time I get done paying bills there wasn't that much money for gas, an since the time I dropped out of ABE, my husband has been in an out of the hospital, an my children have been sick. Its just been so hard. An as I said before I want so much to get my GED, so I can enroll in nursing school."

10. "I left ABE because my husbend and I were fighting alot because I was trying to get more education. He didn't graduate from high School and he thinks that because I di it will a threat to our marriage. I

still plan to one day further my education and become a Nurse. But for now The way my husbend feels I won't be getting it too soon. I wish There was some way I could convince him to get his G.E.D. but He won't."

11. "for anyone to better his self in school this A.B.E. is good for anyone who wants to get ahead in life as a Divorced man at that time the courts were taking up alot of my time But if they have It Back in _____ or Gibsonberg Ill attend It once again for the same subjects I had before"

12. "I don't think the answer you need are in your Book But lay in each person For me I was Bored, confused & not enough self motivation"

13. "I have gotten remarried senic I've been in ABE. And I now have a 8 month old son. And Im expecting again in November."

From the Completers:

1. "Because of ABE. I quit work at a UniRoyal Plant where I worked for 12 yr. I go to work as a Production Supervisor for W.S.O.S. in Fremont. Now I am attending Terra Technical College. Taking Management courses.

"I hope A.B.E. is not one of Reagans cut Backs cause what else do we have if its not for our Educational Program.

"One complaint I do have is why do they have such weared Math. Their are Students in School who graduate with just general math all through

School. But yet we have to learn algebra for an Equvelent test.

"Its alright if your a Brain or have plenty of time to devote to your subjects. The majority of the people are older and dropouts from School. I feel that a simple math test is suficint. After all how often do people actualy use algerbra. I hope this infirmation helps."

2. "The people in my class were on many different levels. It seemed like the teachers just couldn't keep us all busy. The people on higher grade levels had to wait around a lot for books or extra assignments. I felt like I wasn't getting anything done, and could probably do as good at home. If it hadn't been for going to nursing school I probably would have quit. I am thankful for being able to get my GED, because after I got it I was accepted in a school of practical nursing."

3. "I think the ABE classes are the best thing ever made available for adults who wish to further their education for whatever reason. They present studies at all levels and are designed to make everyone feel capable of accomplishing their goals."

4. "I thought the teacher I had was very good. What questions I had _____answered, and gave me the help I needed. I think this is a very good project. I couldn't afford to finish high school through correspondence course, this was perfect for me. With a teacher there I could get the help I needed without having to wait for the mail. Once I even called_____ at night because I didn't understand an Algebra question. _____helped me over the phone."

5. "I needed to work alone or with my mother's tutoring at my own pace. When I felt good, I advanced fast--I could stop when I was sick. Could attend class when I was stuck and get individual help. I liked it."

6. "I have only high praise for the ABC Program. Especially for my teacher, _____. _____ gave me courage and help whenever I needed it.

"It really gives you a good feeling to be able to get your diploma - no matter how old you are.

"I have encouraged several people to get theirs.

"The only thing, your signs do not let people know it also is available to get your diplomas. I thought it was just to learn if you couldn't read or write. I know basicly that is what it is for."

7. "I had gone to a different school for my G.E.D. Diplomate and I didn't learn half as much as I did with _____. _____ is just Super! and very understanding. I am now going to Owens Tech. and I hope to have someone like _____ as an instructor. I know that I do have one like _____, I will progress further in my education."

8. "The teacher was excellent, helpful, understanding, with a great personality. I am a LPN. for almost 20 yrs. My work is all volunteer as my health isn't very good now. My certificate means so much to me."

9. "I feel that the GED Program is a fantastic opportunity for people who would like to get their high school equivalency. Without the help I received in the ABE Class I would not have achieved what I have.

I had bought books to study but found the math too difficult without help.

"Thanks to a great instructor, _____,I passed my tests with good grades. I am now attending Terra Technical College part time and hope to eventually obtain a degree in some type of engineering."

10. "I am sorry to find out about ABE so late in life. Had I known about this class 10 years ago I could of completed it them. I think ABE classes need more publicity. If people could only realize and understand how easy it is, I'm sure more would complete their education. Had I finished this a few years earlier I could possibly be now enrolled in an apprenticeship program of skilled trades. (Age limit is 30) (at my place of employ.) Anyway, I'm passing the word to others in hopes they may find better opportunities.

"Thanks for your time and the time of others."